

# The hazards of headphones

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The use of headphones is contributing to hearing loss among young people.  
Stock photo

When it comes to hearing loss, a tiny iPod seems much less threatening than a rock concert but it actually may be more dangerous.

Research has found that college students who listen to their [iPods](#) in a [noisy environment](#) tend to play them at 80 percent of the possible volume, putting their hearing at risk after a little more than an hour.

Other studies have found that young people have a rate of impaired hearing 2 ½ times that of their parents and grandparents.

Dr. Kouros Parham, an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) specialist at the Health Center, says it doesn't matter whether it's an iPod, MP3 player, or

an old-fashioned Walkman, hearing loss simply depends on how loud the sound is and how long you're exposed to it. The louder the sound, the less time it takes to damage your ears.

Parham offers tips on how to prevent hearing loss:

- Decrease the volume when in a quiet environment.
- Turn volume down if you can't hear people speaking near you.
- Avoid turning up volume to block out noisy surroundings.
- Limit the amount of time you use earbuds/[headphones](#) at high volume.
- If you experience ringing in the ear or hear muffled speech, rest your ear.
- Protect your ears from household, occupational, or recreational activities involving loud noise by wearing ear plugs and/or ear muffs.

The popularity of iPods has brought new attention to the issue of [hearing loss](#), and the estimate that 50 million people in the U.S. will be hearing impaired by 2050 may finally get people to listen.

Provided by University of Connecticut

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